Duke Power
A Duke Energy Company

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
11555 Rockville Pike
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Subject: Oconee Nuclear Station, Unit 3
Docket No. 50-287
Response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02: "Leakage from Reactor Pressure Vessel Lower Head Penetrations and Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary Integrity"

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.54(f), this letter and enclosure provide Duke Energy Corporation's (Duke) response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, Item 2, for the Oconee Nuclear Site Unit 3 (ONS-3). This item requested that Duke provide within 60-days of unit restart, plant-specific information regarding the inspection results of the reactor pressure vessel lower head penetrations performed for ONS-3.

If there are any questions regarding this registration, please contact Stephen Newman, Oconee Regulatory Compliance Group, at (864) 885-4388.

Very truly yours,

R. A. Jones, Vice President
Oconee Nuclear Site

ENCLOSURE

cc:

W. D. Travers, Regional Administrator
Region II

M. C. Shannon, Senior Resident Inspector
Oconee Nuclear Site

Mr. L. N. Olshan, Project Manager
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

ENCLOSURE
Oconee Nuclear Site
Response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, Item 2

Requested Information

(2) Within 60 days of plant restart following the next inspection of the RPV lower head penetrations, the subject PWR addressees should submit to the NRC a summary of the inspections performed, the extent of the inspections, the methods used, a description of the as-found condition of the lower head, any findings of relevant indications of through-wall leakage, and a summary of the disposition of any findings of boric acid deposits and any corrective actions taken as a result of indications found.

Duke Response

On October 13, 2004, Duke conducted a bare metal inspection of the Unit 3 reactor vessel lower head, including 360 degrees around 100 percent of the bottom mounted instrument (BMI) penetrations. Duke conducted the inspection using video cameras and direct visual observation.

The inspection showed no evidence of boron or any other indications of leakage from the reactor vessel lower head or penetrations. Deterioration (flaking) of the original preservative coating on the lower head was observed as was seen on Units 1 and 2, although to a lesser extent. Some superficial corrosion was noted where bare metal was exposed by the loss of coating. The loss of the protective coating is not of significance, as it was not applied for in-service protection of the vessel. There was no wastage observed.

The Oconee Unit 3 refueling outage for end of cycle 21 was concluded on January 2, 2005, when the unit was placed on-line.

R. A. Jones, being duly sworn, states that he is Vice President, Oconee Nuclear Site, and that all the statements and matters set forth herein are true and correct to the best of his knowledge.

R. A. Jones, Vice President
Oconee Nuclear Site

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 14th day of January, 2005

Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

6/12/2013
(date)

SEAL